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LR 326

although smoking and problem drinking get more attention in clinical practice and health policy, obesity has a stronger association with increased spending on health care and chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. Obesity doubled in the nineties to about 23 percent of the adults and, basically, the report indicated that overweight folks caused more...costs more to the state than do smokers. So I think it's a little unfair to say that we're just simply recouping our health costs. I don't...I don't buy it. Part of the argument in favor of this bill is that we need to curb smoking by youth, and some of the studies I have indicate that youth smoking has actually decreased. But does it seem right to tax a particular group in order to dictate or control their behavior? I think that if we're going to contril...control youth smoking, we should do it directly. You know, we should demand penalties perhaps on retailers for selling it, or repeat sales to minors, or even maybe increase, even I know we've expressed a reluctance in doing this, increase the penalties on minors to do this. But it just seems to be kind of unfair that we're taxing to indirectly when we could actually control directly the behavior. One other thing I wanted to mention, Senator Bromm asked why are we doing such a large increase? And I say that the reason we are doing this is because it is politically popular. Only a small segment of society smokes, and the study indicated that 70 percent of Nebraskans favor such tax. Well, nobody wants to raise any tax but this seems to be the most politically favorable tax to raise. But I think that any time you're basing a significant portion of the state's budget on a decreasing source of revenue, then I think we've made the wrong choice. And I don't support this. I think 50 cents is too much. I think that we're asking one small segment of our society to take too big of a burden of our budget problems. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Mr. Clerk, items for the record.

CLERK: Mr. President, your Committee on Enrollment and Review reports they've examined and reviewed LB 1309 and recommend that same be placed on Select File; LB 898 and LB 898A, all on Select File. I have amendments to be printed to LB 276, and a motion to be printed to LB 946. Those will be printed. New resolutions, LR 327 by Senator...or LR 326, excuse me, by